



# Real Estate



**New to collecting?**

Rosemary McKittrick has 10 things for you to remember. **Page I-8**

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THE NEW MEXICAN

## Designing a formal dining room? Remember wow factor

Formal dining rooms are not used very much anymore. During the week, it seems a miracle to have everyone home and fed at the same time. The casual seating approach around a kitchen table or counter has become the norm. However, the dining room in our house remains a very important place, a special room where we entertain friends and celebrate feast days with family.

A room's decor should complement its function. So if you are planning a dining room for special get-togethers, why not enhance the space with glam and sparkle? It's also a night room, which lends itself to imaginative, dramatic strokes.



**DEBBIE TRAVIS**  
*House to Home*

In the dining room seen here, I employed a combination of luxurious materials and reflective surfaces. The maple hardwood floors and banana-cream painted walls blend softly together to create the backdrop for a tone-on-tone palette of rich, light-wood browns and warm whites. The

furnishings are an exciting mix of modern and traditional. White leather Parsons chairs surround a full-length wood table that is topped with bronzed glass.

It's always inspiring to think up some feature that's fun and fanciful, a conversation piece I consider the wow factor. Chandeliers are all the rage again; this one exemplifies today's trend of mixing the old and the new, the sleek and the ornate. A traditional crystal drop chandelier sits inside a tinted tube of plastic. You can make a cheaper version of this expensive European fixture with a glass chandelier floating inside

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Modern features update traditional design in this sparkling dining-room setting.

Courtesy photo

### HOME DÉCOR

# Little cash, big changes



A change of color is the quickest way to transform the look and feel of a space.

Heather Wood/For The New Mexican

## Use imagination, fresh eye to enliven that tired room

By **Heather Wood**  
For The New Mexican

**A**re you tired of your living room décor but don't know where to start to transform your space? Stuck with the same old stuff and short on cash? Ready for a new look but not the credit-card bills that come with it?

With a little creativity and effort, you can bring a fresh look to any room in your home or office at little or no cost.

Resources such as the Internet offer nearly limitless information, photos and products for affordable decorating. An increase in catalogs from home retailers such as Pier One, Crate and Barrel and Restoration Hardware means more inspiration. The explosion of do-it-yourself home-decorating shows on cable TV has encouraged average homeowners to become weekend warriors of paint and fabric.

There's never been a better time to become a hands-on home-improvement type.

### Where to start

Before you start tearing your home apart, take a good look at the space you want to redo. What is it that's really bothering you? Too much clutter? A cramped room arrangement? A lack of color — or, on the contrary, a circus of colors?

By assessing what doesn't work, you'll be better prepared to determine how to fix it.

Make a list of the space's challenges, jotting down ideas for your ideal room. Go online and search "no- and low-cost decorating." Pick up one of the many home-retailer catalogs you no doubt have stacked somewhere in your home and

see what appeals to you. Get out your camera, stand in each corner of the room and snap away. It's amazing what a picture can reveal by offering us an image of the entire space.

It's hard to envision a new look when you're staring at your usual surroundings. Start by clearing the room of all clutter. That's right — piles of papers, books, magazines and catalogs, random objects and other things without a home.

Next, clear the room of all accessories, tabletop photos and mementos. When you move them, group like items together: metal objects, ceramics, glass and wooden items. Group by color, theme and style, keeping collections intact.

Finally, remove the artwork, plants, lamps, etc. Now you've got some breathing room in which to start creating your "new" space.

### Pieces of a puzzle

Good room arrangements always consider traffic flow — and yours should, too. Perplexed about how best to go about it? There's a reason highly trained professional interior decorators and designers work first on paper to create a room: It's called space planning.

By making scale models of a room and the furniture to go in it, you can save your back — and a lot of the time you would have spent trying to fit your 8-foot sofa into a 7-foot, 5-inch space.

There is myriad space-planning software available via the Internet. *Better Homes and Gardens* offers a free "arrange-a-room" utility on its Web site. If you're electronically challenged, there's also good, old-fashioned graph paper.

However you choose to do it,

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